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United States and Japan. The book is beautifully printed on heavy Japanese paper, and the color-prints are exquisitely soft and beautiful.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF FLOWERS, TREES, FRUITS, AND PLANTS. By CHARLES M. SKINNER. Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott & Co., 1911.

This volume is useful rather than ornamental. It contains an alphabetical list of flowers, trees, shrubs, and plants, and in each case mentions the plant's symbolic value and any mythological tale connected with the plant. The book shows research and learning and is a valuable addition to any garden library. The only fault to find with it is that it is cheaply illustrated with a few ill-chosen and inappropriate photographs.

THE BROWNING. THEIR LIFE AND ART. By LILIAN WHITING. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1911.

This is an ornamental, well-illustrated volume particularly suitable for a gift-book to any one interested in the most glorious era of Victorian literature. Without any pretense at anything new or of special import, although the author quotes from several unpublished letters of the poet, the volume has much gentle charm and has hit upon the new idea of combining the two biographies in one rather heavy volume. The author's friend, Robert Barrett Browning, appears more often in this biography than in any of the separate biographies of the poets, and supplies a pleasant little picture of the family group.

Miss Whiting has a habit of using more words than her thought requires, and of padding her real matter with a great deal of extraneous and unnecessary comment, theories of Karma, etc., etc., but the spirit of the book, despite the many flaws in craftsmanship, is gentle and lovely, and as a volume of literary gossip, a reconstruction of a most interesting period, it is quite delightful.

THE EARLY LITERARY CAREER OF ROBERT BROWNING. By THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911.

It is difficult to disagree with Mr. Lounsbury's little book of abuse without a sense of outrage. It seems such a waste of time and energy and thought to write a volume with the avowed aim of attacking a great reputation. It is a commonplace of literary criticism with a certain type of *littérateur* of an earlier generation in America to say that, if Robert Browning had been educated at a public school and an English university he would not have written Browning's works, but something quite different; certainly something more suited to the taste of the average university professor. Perhaps he would have written Lowell's Poems, or Clarence Edmund Stedman's. We are perfectly certain that even these advantages would not have induced him to write on Spelling Reform or the Standard of Usage in English, though we might then have been spared the present little volume of detraction.

It is quite evident that Mr. Lounsbury has been excessively annoyed by the more difficult of Browning's Poems, and even more annoyed by

the excessive adulation accorded to Browning a decade or two ago. Hence this little volume, which does as little credit to Mr. Lounsbury's temper as to his literary insight. The main thesis is that great work is always easy to read and of universal appeal. This truly democratic and American doctrine has had many advocates of late years, and when we find the man in the street preferring Plato and Dante to the gossip in the *Sunday World*, or youth clamoring for Kant and George Meredith, we shall begin to consider the claim. Thus far we have never heard of a great author who was easy to read. We are quite mindful in making the assertion of the claims of Shakespeare. He is said to have been a popular playwright in his day, and perhaps he was, but we have known several persons of quite average intelligence who had to read *Troilus and Cressida* three or four times to extract the story, and certainly Shakespeare has not been without numerous commentators.

Mr. Lounsbury holds it the duty of the writer, of the communicator of ideas, to put himself in the position of the recipient, apparently forgetting how very wholesome it is for the recipient to work himself into the position of the communicator. Again the professor of English quotes Donne as an example of a writer whose poetry is lost to the world because he was so obscure, and yet we have never heard of a single reader of poetry who did not hold Donne as a prime favorite, and he would indeed be a dull discerner who could read the *Second Anniversary* without delight. Is Richard Burton lost to the world because of his obscurities and quaintnesses, or is he in every reader's library? Is Dante without commentators? In fact, we find the whole theory that great writing is necessarily easy reading mistaken, although the converse, that easy writing is always hard reading to the man of taste, is quite true.

Another contention of Mr. Lounsbury's is that men of literary taste object to obscurity, and therefore Browning's appreciators are young men or women of active intellectuality who enjoy mental effort but have no taste. We had supposed that Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Swinburne, Coventry Patmore, George Meredith, Alice Meynell, Francis Thompson, Philip Bourke Marston, Lewis Nottelshipp might have been accredited with literary taste, and they were among Browning's fervent admirers.

Mr. Lounsbury quotes largely from contemporary criticism of Browning's work — unsigned criticism often contemptuous, and always contemptible in its ignorance and silliness. Many pages of severe reprehension are given to Browning's account of his difficulties with McCready. So eloquent are the insinuations against Browning's honesty and straightforwardness in the matter, so conclusive the evidence that Browning misstated wilfully the entire matter, that one is amazed at the end of the ten pages of proof against his honor, fairness, and truthfulness to find the sentence, "He himself (Browning) was incapable of making a statement which he knew to be untrustworthy." And yet just preceding this we read, "I have brought here into sharp contrast Browning's statement of facts about the production of *A Blot in the Scutcheon*." (Why, by the bye, does Professor Lounsbury call this play *A Blot in the Scutcheon* with the facts as they actually are?) "Further minor conflicts with the eternal verities; further minor discrepancies between the two accounts for which he is responsible, lack of time and space compels me to omit."

If this is the way in which a great poet and a great world-force, ad-

mittedly incapable of a statement he knew to be untrustworthy, may be treated, what tenderness is due to a volume whose sole object is to injure if possible a great reputation, to drag low the noblest reach humanity has yet made, a great poet?

Mr. Lounsbury objects very seriously to Browning's "liberty of expression which approaches lawlessness." Now among scholars, Mr. Lounsbury's nickname is, "the Apostle of Lawlessness." What a turning of tables is here! But there is a difference. Browning's lawlessness is the laboring of a full and great mind struggling to convey profound meanings to small minds; Mr. Lounsbury's lawlessness is the attempt to drag all life and all literature to the level where it can be the possession of the least-trained intelligence. The author of the volume does not in the least mind writing a sentence which begins, "*About the value or correctness of what of it is here given,*" etc., etc., and yet Flaubert wept when he found in a published sentence of his a repeated particle!

This little book was not needed to point out to readers that Tennyson is simpler to read than Browning, since he had a much simpler, less metaphysical mind; nor yet to show that Browning's fame must rest, in the ultimate analysis, on his lyrics and dramatic monologues rather than upon Strafford and Sordello. The attempt to prove that so noble a man was pig-headed, conceited, and unpleasant is an ungrateful and not a very worthy task.

One last word; this book contains lectures given at the University of Virginia in a course under the Barbour-Page foundation. There is perhaps no place in the entire world where the particular tone of this book would be more popular and do more thorough injury to the young minds accepting it. There are numerous misprints and typographical errors in the book. We are sorry to have seen the book; we are sorrier that any publisher wanted to publish it, and we are most sorry that the author should have felt called upon to write it or to deliver the lectures contained in it.

GOETHE AND HIS WOMEN FRIENDS. By MARY CAROLINE CRAWFORD. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1911.

A man's intellect is never impossible to interpret more or less adequately, but when it comes to his heart, that is generally to be left to the Recording Angel. Mind may be followed and understood, but the heart very seldom. The "many-sided Goethe" was also many-sided in his emotions, and there would seem to have been in his nature a sensibility that responded quickly to almost every form of feminine attraction. But while Goethe was successively "in love," as the common phrase is, from his very boyhood on, it may yet be doubted whether he ever truly *loved*, unless it was his sister Cornelia, for whom he surely felt a very tender and sincere affection. For there is a great difference between the heart and the emotions, between emotional susceptibility on the one hand and a capacity for deep and lasting affection on the other. Whenever Goethe was in love he was always very much in love, as witness his neglect of his mother during Charlotte von Stein's ascendancy; but he never loved as did Michael Angelo or Dante or Sidney, for instance. Love, who was the "Lord of Nobleness" to Dante, was to Goethe an